

October 3, 2013

To: Ms. Vera-Lynn Kubinec

From: Dr. David Scammell

Re: Sandra Morris complaint

I am writing in response to your recent inquiry concerning Ms. Morris' dog Toby who was euthanized in 2010. As you are aware, Ms. Morris sent a written complaint to the Peer Review Committee of the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association. This complaint was reviewed and to my knowledge, the veterinarian cleared of any fault.

As part of the complaint process, Ms. Morris expressed concern that she was denied visitation with Toby until payment arrangements were complete. It is my understanding that a former receptionist of the Pembina Veterinary Hospital, a related clinic sharing the same physical space but at different hours of each day, made this statement to Ms. Morris. This was wrong and very unfortunate and I certainly understand why Ms. Morris was upset. After this incident, we reviewed the visitation policy and shared it with staff to ensure everyone understood it in order to prevent this type of incident from happening to another pet owner. We have also taken steps to ensure all new staff members are aware of all of our policies.

The Winnipeg Animal Emergency Hospital services a region stretching from northwestern Ontario to western Manitoba to Iqualuit. We provide service through a partnership with Pembina Veterinary Hospital for 24 hour veterinary care each day of the year. That means that veterinarians and registered animal health technicians are present on-site all the time. We are the only group in Manitoba that offers this service.

The Winnipeg Animal Emergency Hospital encounters clients of all financial means. Some are very distressed when they bring their pets to us. Unfortunately, not all are able to afford the care needed and hard choices are sometimes necessary. That being said, we strive to offer compassion to all of our clients, regardless of their circumstances and discuss treatment options with them where possible to reduce costs.

The loss of a pet is never easy as they are truly members of the family. I understand Ms. Morris' loss was very difficult for her. After Toby's death, she sent a picture of him to my clinic for us to display in the waiting room. Clearly, he was deeply loved.

It is terribly unfortunate that what was already a distressing time for Ms. Morris was made worse by the actions of an employee of the veterinary hospital acting in this fashion. I feel badly about how the situation was handled.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

David Scammell, D.V.M.
Winnipeg Animal Emergency Hospital